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Are Australia's Suburbs Swamped by Asians and Muslims? Countering political claims with data

ABSTRACT

Recent decades have seen substantial growth across many developed world countries of right-wing populist political parties whose policies oppose immigration and multi-culturalism as threats to the majority way of life there. These are exemplified in Australia by Pauline Hanson's One Nation party, which was successful at elections there at the turn of the twenty-first century and again in 2016. Part of this party's rhetoric focuses on the geography of immigrant groups in Australia's cities, with claims that their members live in ghettos. Is that factually correct? Using data from the 2011 Australian census this paper analyses the distribution of Asians and Muslims (the two groups picked out by One Nation and its leader) at four spatial scales within the country's eleven largest urban areas. It finds no evidence at all of intensive residential segregation of Muslims, and although there are concentrations of Asians – notably in Sydney and Melbourne – most residents claiming Asian ancestry live in neighbourhoods and suburbs where they form a minority (in many cases a small minority) only of the local population.

KEYWORDS

Immigration; multi-culturalism; One Nation; residential segregation; Australian urban areas

1. Introduction

The linked issues of immigration and the emergence of multicultural societies, especially in many of the largest cities of the so-called developed world, have come to public prominence in recent years, in part (in large part in many cases) driven by populist political parties and media outlets. Thus, for example, the Front National in France has argued against that country's rapidly changing cultural composition – as more recently, among others, have the Alternative für Deutschland in Germany and the Partij voor de Vrijheid in the Netherlands. The United Kingdom Independence Party has argued strongly for controls on the number of immigrants, and that argument was central to the successful case made by it and members of several other political parties that the United Kingdom should leave the European Union. Although that case for 'Brexit' attracted support across most sectors of British society, it was particularly successful at winning over large numbers within what has become termed the 'anxious class',¹ those – especially the relatively old and those with no or few educational qualifications – whose livelihoods have been negatively affected by globalisation and the changing structure of the international division of labour and who believe the welfare state is favouring immigrants rather than themselves (on which see, for example, Gest, 2016). Donald Trump's campaign for the United States' presidency appealed to similar (white) groups within the electorate, for example with his policy proposals that Muslims should be prevented from entering the country and that a wall across the southern border should enable control of the immigration of potential criminals.

Such political movements have also characterised Australia. The One Nation party was founded by Pauline Hanson in 1997 after she was dis-endorsed as a candidate by the Liberal party prior to the 1996 general election, in what had been a safe Labor seat, because of comments she made about indigenous Australians. (Deutchman, 2000, puts this in international context.) She was elected to the House of Representatives in 1996 as an independent, however, and sat as a One Nation representative until 1998 when she lost her seat – but her party gained one in the Senate then; it

was won again in 2001 but lost in 2004. Support then fell away but the party was relaunched in 2015 as Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party, and won four seats in the Senate at the 2016 federal election.

Contemporary political life in many of the countries where such parties attract considerable support is characterised by a proliferation of what Donald Trump refers to as 'fake news', statements that are at least questionable if not demonstrably false but which often gain considerable traction through their rapid spread via various social media. Politicians and their spokespersons may seek to rebut such 'fake news' by presenting 'alternative facts' – defined by the term's creator as 'additional facts and alternative information'.² Debate may then focus on the veracity of these competing claims in a situation deemed 'post-truth', where 'objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief'.³ In many situations personal belief may be important in how a factual situation is presented – one person's half-full glass is another's half-empty glass; one person's terrorist is another person's freedom fighter. If, however, the fact on which an opinion is based is not published, or a claim is made without reference to 'objective' data regarding the claimed situation, then debate will probably be biased and decisions, not only by individuals but possibly also by societies as a whole, made on false premises.

This post-truth situation has become an increasing problem with the growing volume of commercially-collected big data now available, much of it with questionable statistical validity (see, for example, Lazer et al., 2014) and whose interpretation by (often self-defined) 'experts' is creating what one commentator has termed a 'crisis of statistics'. For him, there is a need for a 'new digital elite [able] to identify the facts, projection and truth amid the rushing stream of data'.⁴ This paper has been prepared in that context: it contrasts some of the claims – the equivalent of what one commentator has termed 'moral panics' (Bauman, 2016) – made by One Nation spokespersons regarding residential segregation in Australian urban areas with the 'facts' as provided by the census data produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

2. National identity, immigration, multiculturalism, and insecurity

Statistical analyses of voting for One Nation in the late 1990s/early 2000s identified clear patterns in its support reflecting variations in attitudes to race and immigration, personal economic difficulties, negative assessments of the political system, and positive evaluations of the leader, Pauline Hanson (Denemark and Bowler, 2002; Gibson et al., 2002). Mughan et al. (2003) stressed the importance of job insecurity as an underpinning factor influencing support for One Nation's wider populist programmes. As globalisation has increased inequalities and threatened economic security among certain groups within society, so they have been attracted to politicians and parties that have not only attacked neo-liberal policies with which multiculturalism has been associated but also condemned the political elites who have promoted such policies.

Those statistical studies accompanied an outpouring of analysis from both academics and media commentators following One Nation's entry onto the Australian political scene. Some of these highlighted wider relationships between 'Hansonism' and multiculturalism, between immigration and 'Australianness' or national identity. Ahluwalia and McCarthy (1998, 80), for example, referred to a 1996 speech by Graeme Campbell, independent Member of Parliament for Kalgoorlie in Western Australia, which highlighted '... multiculturalism and immigration. The two are intertwined ... [a] multicultural industry [which] is committed to maintaining ethnic diversity at the expense of mainstream Australia,' and an Australian identity based on 'the predominantly Judeo-Christian, Anglo-Celtic settlement of [Australia] and the legal and constitutional links with England'. Hanson's (1996, 3802-05) maiden speech in Parliament echoed Campbell's remarks:

... for far too long ordinary Australians have been kept out of any debate ... I and most Australians want our immigration policy radically reviewed and that of multiculturalism

abolished ...we are in danger of being swamped by Asians ... They have their own culture and religion, form ghettos and do not assimilate.

Focusing on national identity, Ahluwalia and McCarthy (1998, 81) compared Hanson's 1996 speech with UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's 1978 'swamping speech' that warned of a need to resist the UK's 'invading hordes' of immigrants,⁵ arguing that Hanson

... [made] a deliberate attempt to evoke the notion of a threat emanating from the very idea of difference ... a link between nationalism and a new form of racism manifest in the revivification of an Australian identity that pre-dates multiculturalism and post-coloniality [i.e. the White Australia period].

Leach (2000, 53) characterised Hansonism as a revolt which had quickly '[d]escended into the old Anglo-Australian bedrock of competitive racism, exposing in the process an older "xenophobic white settler" notion of community'. Ang and Stratton (1998, 36) concluded that it was very difficult to argue against this position:

The pluralist discourse of 'cultural diversity', which emphasises the harmonious co-existence of ethnic groups, is simply not capable of countering the divisive and conflict-ridden imaginary produced by discourses of racial tension.

Ang (2003, 51) saw in Pauline Hanson's rhetoric a sense of insecurity, of an 'anxious nation', a 'cultural anxiety' representing 'a historical continuity in Australian attitudes' and a 'sharp reminder that the structures of feeling of White Australia have not disappeared in a time of Aboriginal reconciliation and multiculturalism'. Stokes (2000, 23) characterised Hansonism as 'conservative populism', distinguishing between 'the people' ('I do believe that I am the voice of mainstream Australia' – Hanson, cited in Smith 1996) and the 'other' from both above and below (Stokes, 2000, 26-29). Political elites and the mass media are seen to have facilitated multicultural and immigration policies that threaten 'the people' through the arrival of culturally different groups, like Asians, seen as challenging the Australian way of life (Muslims were added in Hanson's 2016 maiden Senate speech). 'The people', however, according to Hanson (cited in Dodd 1997, 228; Dodd was Hanson's biographer), have:

The chance to stand against those who have betrayed our country and would destroy our identity by forcing upon us the culture of others ... if we fail ...we will lose our country forever and become strangers in our own land.

3. One Nation and the 2016 federal election

One Nation's revival from 2015 continued in the same vein. Its 'manifesto' for the 2016 federal elections – as set out on its website⁶ – was headed *Bringing Back Australian Values* and included the following:

- 'We support a sustainable refugee programme, but call for a stop to Muslim refugees';
- 'We advocate for a zero-net immigration policy where those who leave Australia are replaced with migrants who are culturally cohesive with Australians and will assimilate. ... We will stop further Muslim immigration'; and
- 'No more building of mosques & Islamic schools until an inquiry is held into Islam, to determine whether it is a religion or totalitarian political ideology, undermining our democracy and way of life'.

These policies are clearly directed against Muslims in particular, but in 2016 Ms Hanson did not resile from her 1996 claim that Australia was 'in danger of being swamped by Asians'.⁷ The party's attack on multiculturalism goes beyond any one group:⁸

Multiculturalism has failed everywhere. It is negative and divisive, a weight that is drowning our once safe and cohesive society. ...

As a government policy, multiculturalism encompassed measures to destroy the Australian culture. It played a large part in migrant selection in an attempt to prevent them from assimilating into Australian society. ...

We would replace it with a policy of assimilation in which it will be made clear to all those applying to migrate to Australia that coming to Australia is a privilege that gives them an overriding, unifying commitment to Australia, to its past, current interests and future first and foremost.

They must accept the basic structures and principles of Australian heritage, society and culture, the constitution and the rule of law, tolerance and equality, parliamentary democracy, freedom of speech and religion, and English as the national language. Whilst they may come from other countries and cultures, loyalty to Australia and Australian Nationalism must come first.

The implications regarding inter-cultural relations in contemporary Australia – and the inferred descriptions of divisions within society, especially with regard to Muslims – are profound. One Nation's claims suggest that of the three types of integration identified by Miller (2016, 132ff.), there is little *social integration* (regular inter-group, inter-personal interaction across a range of social contexts), a questionable amount of *civic integration* (sharing 'principles and norms that guide their social and political life' – p. 133), and very little *cultural integration* (having a common cultural identity). Where is the evidence for such claims?

For more than a century, social scientists – largely following the lead set in the United States (initially in Chicago) – have associated the lack of social and cultural integration with residential segregation in cities: different groups live their social and cultural lives apart from each other, even though they may have considerable contact in their workplaces and other spheres. Critics of multiculturalism tend to characterise the areas where minority groups congregate as exacerbating 'them-and-us' divisions within society: the minority groups interact socially only with their neighbours, sustaining their cultural identities and generating tensions between themselves and the 'unknown others' (of the society's majority) who live elsewhere. Pauline Hanson illustrated this in 1996 with her claim that Asians in Australia 'have their own culture and religion, form ghettos and do not assimilate', and One Nation's statement of aims on its website in 2016 claimed that 'all Australians ... should work toward unification, not segregation, under the one law for all'.⁹ Pauline Hanson was reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* days after the 4 July 2016 federal election as repeating her 1996 claim that 'Australians fear that their suburbs have been "swamped by Asians"' –

... You go and ask a lot of people in Sydney, at Hurstville or some of the other suburbs. They feel they have been swamped by Asians ...

You ask people in Melbourne about how they feel about it as well.¹⁰

In response, a subsequent article argued that 'Failing to expose her lies will mean that for some they become facts'.¹¹

So what are the 'facts'? Some of the claims involve perceptions but basic statistical data can be used to explore the extent and intensity of segregation. Are there substantial tracts of Australian cities (ghettos even?) where Asians and other minorities – Muslims, for example (on their spatial separatism – or lack of it – see Dunn and Hopkins, 2016¹²) – are concentrated and dominate the local population? There has been much empirical research into the intensity of residential segregation of ethnic populations over the last century, with comparative studies showing that segregation, especially of African-Americans, was generally more intensive in American than other comparable cities (see Johnston et al., 2007). Ghettos, as defined in the American context, are rare in other countries: ethnic groups are segregated to some extent in Australian cities, as illustrated by recent work on Sydney (Johnston et al., 2016, 2017) but is that patterning within the urban fabric consistent with Pauline Hanson's claims regarding ghettoization and 'swamping'? To address that question, and evaluate the factual basis for the 'moral panic' those claims both reflect and potentially foment, the

following section provides basic descriptive data on the residential distributions of Asians and Muslims in Australia's main urban areas.

4. The geography of ethnic and religious minorities in Australia

We used data from the 2011 census Tablebuilder facility (<https://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/webapi/jsf/dataCatalogueExplorer.xhtml>) for the eight Greater Capital City Statistical Areas (GCCSAs), and the Statistical Areas, Level 4 (SA4s) for Newcastle and Geelong; Wollongong comprised the Illawarra SA4) (Table 1). Their populations ranged from 106,257 (Darwin) to 4,028,525 (Sydney), and are where the majority of the Asian and Muslim populations have settled. Two variables were analysed: the percentage of the population in each sub-area who claimed Asian (including part-Asian) ancestry;¹³ and the percentage who responded that their religious affiliation was to Islam.

The summary data for the urban areas in Table 1 suggest a clear distinction between Australia's two largest metropolitan areas – Melbourne and Sydney – and the smaller places. More than one-in-five Sydney residents and just over one-in-six Melbourne residents claimed Asian ancestry. The capital cities of the other three mainland states also had relatively large Asian components to their populations, although the largest outwith Melbourne and Sydney was for the federal capital, Canberra. Three non-capital city urban areas (Geelong, Wollongong and Newcastle), along with Hobart, had less than five per cent of their populations claiming Asian ancestry but Darwin had three times that many. For Muslims, the percentages were much smaller, with only Sydney (just) exceeding five per cent of its population identifying themselves with Islam and seven of the eleven places having less than two per cent (Table 1).

Each urban place has been divided into four hierarchically nested sets of subareas, at increasing spatial scales, from which we have excluded those with less than twenty residents and those encompassing special areas (such as an airport or an industrial area):

- *Neighbourhoods* (SA1 areas in the Australian Bureau of Statistics terminology), of which there were 33,337 with a mean population of 423 (standard deviation, 164); nested within
- *Suburbs* (SSC areas), of which there were 2,728 – mean population 5,175 (standard deviation, 5,634); nested within
- *Districts* (SA2 areas), of which there were 1,166 – mean population 12,108 (standard deviation, 6,702); and nested within
- *Regions* (SA3 areas), of which there were 186 – mean population 75,900 (standard deviation, 42,782).

The two key variables were separately calculated for each areal unit at each scale of the classification.

Asian and Muslim overall concentrations

Table 2 gives the frequency distributions for each of the two variables, at each spatial scale: along with the maximum and minimum values, also shown are the deciles and the quartiles. Thus for the percentage Asian at the neighbourhood scale the minimum and maximum values are 0.0 and 92.0 and the four quartiles of the distribution are divided at 4.1, 9.3 (the median), and 19.4 per cent respectively.

Regarding the geography of *Asians* in Australia's major urban centres, whatever the scale of the analysis, in half of the areas they formed less than around 10 per cent of the local population, and less than around 5 per cent in one-quarter of the areas (the median value at the regional scale was 10.1 per cent and the first quartile was 5.1). Thus across half of the subdivisions within the country's

11 urban areas examined here, Asians formed at most only a small minority of the population. There were, however, areas where they were a much larger proportion of the total. At the smallest scale, for example, in ten per cent of all neighbourhoods the Asian percentage exceed one-third of the total (i.e. the ninth decile is 33.3 per cent); that share is slightly smaller at the larger scales, but still exceeds 25 per cent. Over metropolitan and major urban Australia as a whole, therefore, Asians form at least one-quarter of the population in ten per cent of the subdivisions – not only of the small neighbourhoods but also the much larger regions. Alongside these areas with substantial Asian populations there was a further considerable proportion of the cities' neighbourhoods, suburbs, districts and regions (40 per cent of them between the median and the ninth decile) where they formed between 10 and (at least) 25 per cent of the local population.

The overall picture provided by data in the left-hand part of Table 2 therefore shows an urban fabric divided into: substantial proportions of their areas with few Asians; considerable tracts where they form a not-insignificant proportion of the local population (less than one-quarter of the total but more than one-tenth, and thus undoubtedly visible in the landscape); and a minority of areas (one-tenth of the total) where they form a much larger segment of the total.

That is a very different situation from the geography of *Muslims*, shown in the right-hand block of data in Table 2. These not only form a much smaller proportion of metropolitan and major urban Australia's total population but are almost entirely absent from many of its component parts. The median percentage at any of the four scales does not exceed 1.2, and the upper quartile 3.2, indicating that there are very few Muslims in most parts of the cities. There are some areas where they apparently dominate – the largest percentage for a neighbourhood is 79.7 (Lakemba–Wiley Park, in Sydney) and for a suburb (Lakemba) is 51.7 – but such situations are rare. They form more than 70 per cent of the population in only five neighbourhoods (four of them in Sydney and one in Melbourne), for example, and there are 82 neighbourhoods (out of 33,337 – 0.002 per cent) where they form more than half.

Very high levels of concentration of Asians and Muslims: a focus on Sydney and Melbourne

How does that picture vary across urban Australia? Table 3 shows the number of subdivisions at each level of the classification where Asians and Muslims form more than 50 and 70 per cent of the local population, for each urban area. (Because they have none at any scale forming more than 70 per cent, eight of the eleven urban areas are excluded from the second block.)

One pattern stands out clearly in these data: areas where Asians and Muslims form a majority of the population are overwhelmingly concentrated in just two cities – Melbourne and Sydney. Indeed, in none of the other nine places is there even a single neighbourhood where Muslims form a majority of the population, let alone more than 70 per cent, and three of them (Newcastle, Geelong and Darwin) have no neighbourhoods where Asians form a majority of the local population. (Over one-in-seven of Darwin's population claimed Asian ancestry, but they are clearly widely distributed throughout its townscape.)

Figures 1-4 map the distributions of those concentrations of Asians and Muslims in Sydney and Melbourne at the neighbourhood scale, using the classification according to their percentages of the local total discussed below. In both cities Asians are mainly found in inner-to-middle neighbourhoods, virtually surrounding the inner city areas with some outer suburban outliers (to the west and south-west in both cases; Figures 1 and 2); in Sydney they are largely absent from the higher status suburbs on both shores of the outer harbour and in Melbourne there are few of them along the eastern shoreline of Port Phillip Bay. In both places the smaller numbers of Muslims are spatially more concentrated, though with small proportions of the total widely distributed through

the cities' suburbs. In Sydney the main concentration is to the south-west of the city centre in and around Lakemba (Figure 3), where the city's main Sunni mosque is located; Melbourne has three separate clusters (Figure 4) – neighbourhoods to the north, north-west, and the south-east (the last close to Monash University).

In Sydney, which has the largest Asian population relative to its size, some 738 of its 9,529 neighbourhoods (7.7 per cent) have an Asian majority: they contain 25.7 per cent of Greater Sydney's total Asian population. Greater Melbourne has fewer Asian majority neighbourhoods, containing 12.1 per cent of its Asian population. The nine other places had 586,558 Asian residents in total, but Asian-majority neighbourhoods contained only 4.2 per cent of them: outwith Melbourne and Sydney very few Asians lived in neighbourhoods where they dominated the population.

At the larger spatial scales, only Sydney had more than a handful of suburbs with an Asian majority; 25 of them together contained 19.7 per cent of Sydney's total Asian population (one of them – Hurstville, identified by Pauline Hanson as a suburb 'swamped by Asians' – had 62.5 per cent of its population claiming Asian ancestry), and nine districts contained 13.3 per cent of the built-up area's Asians. Such relatively intense concentrations are even rarer elsewhere; Melbourne has four districts with Asian majorities (containing only 6.1 per cent of its total Asian population).

Sydney and Melbourne also have the largest Muslim populations, but few of them are concentrated in areas – even at the smallest spatial scale of the neighbourhood – where they form more than half of the local population. The 57 such neighbourhoods in Sydney contain only 7.1 per cent of all Muslims there and the 25 in Melbourne contain just 4.5 per cent. And if the focus is on neighbourhoods where they predominate in the local population, only 0.07 per cent of Sydney's Muslims live in neighbourhoods where they form more than 70 per cent of the population, and 0.02 per cent of Melbourne's. Only one suburb in those two cities – Lakemba in southwest Sydney – has more than half of its population Muslim. (Lakemba has been categorised as 'Australia's unofficial Muslim capital';¹⁴ its Muslim population is predominantly Lebanese.) Even where there are strong concentrations of this minority religious group they tend to be localised in particular small neighbourhoods; there are no extensive areas in Greater Sydney – let alone anywhere else in Australia – where Muslims form the majority.

5. In conclusion

Populist political parties – such as Pauline Hanson's One Nation – promote their causes by creating what Bauman (2016, 2) terms moral panics, fears of 'some evil [that] threatens the well-being of society'. Multiculturalism as a result of mass migration is presented as creating such fears because the immigrants – or at least many of them – are 'strangers ... [who] tend to cause anxiety because of being strange – and so, fearsomely unpredictable, unlike the people with whom we interact daily and from whom we believe we know what to expect' (Bauman, 2016, 8). For some – whom Bauman identifies as 'mixophiles' – the presence of strangers in their midst is a positive aspect of city life, but that is not the case for the 'mixophobes'. The latter, he argues, tend to be concentrated among those who 'lack the capacity to cut themselves off from the ... all too often unfriendly, distrustful and hostile urban environments, to whose hidden dangers they are doomed to remain exposed for life' (pp. 10-11). Those fears are stoked up into 'xenophobia, racism and the chauvinistic variety of nationalism' (p.13) and the presence of 'strangers' is presented as 'embodiments of the collapse of order' (p.15), providing 'highly fertile and nourishing meadows tempting many a political vote-gatherer to graze on them' – an opportunity that 'a growing number of politicians would be loath to miss': such politicians capitalize on 'the anxiety caused by the influx of strangers – who, it is feared, will push down further the wages and salaries that already refuse to grow...' (p.17).

It may be that Australia, like other societies, is becoming what Amin (2012) has termed a 'land of strangers' because even where there is cultural mixing within neighbourhoods and suburbs nevertheless 'Today, people live next to each other largely as strangers' because there is little social contact between neighbours. One of its consequences, Amin argues (2010, 55), is that neighbouring will tend to embrace

...an art of self-protection mutual avoidance, skirting around trouble. ... The danger in this is to court isolationist or punitive ways of living with difference. It turns neighbourhoods into zones of discipline and surveillance. It makes us wary of the Muslim, the beggar, the welfare scrounger, the dissident, the immigrant, the one who doesn't fit in. The logical extension of this culture is that the neighbourhood ceases to be a place of peaceful coexistence among strangers and becomes instead one of fear and suspicion of the other.

That fear and suspicion resulting from neighbourhood segregation provides the foundation for moral panic.

Such moral panic associated with residential segregation is a characteristic feature of many contemporary political parties in a wide range of countries (see, for example, Oesch, 2008; Rydgren, 2013). In part the panic is exacerbated through spatialisation of the growing presence of strangers: not only are those strangers characterised as 'swamping' societies and introducing alien cultural traits that threaten established ways-of-living through their numerical presence but by congregating in particular areas – notably neighbourhoods and suburbs within cities – they distance themselves from their 'host societies' and create tensions between 'them-and-us' based on relative ignorance through non-contact. The moral panics fomented by Pauline Hanson's One Nation party are clear examples of those processes: Australia, it claims, is being swamped by alien cultures – Asian and Muslim – and they are taking over large tracts of its urban landscape, creating separate cultural territories which others – those whose votes are courted by the populist political parties – view with fear and suspicion (cf. Uslander, 2012).

But is that the case? Are Australia's main urban areas split territorially into segregated zones where different groups live apart from each other (cf. Poulsen et al. 2004)? The descriptive analyses of Australian census data reported here have shown that with regard to Muslims:

- They form only a small percentage of the populations of the country's eleven largest built-up areas; and
- Within those eleven places there are very few small neighbourhoods where they form more than five per cent of the local population, and extremely few where they are in a majority locally – with all of those neighbourhoods being in Sydney and Melbourne.

Muslims are widely scattered through Australia's urban fabric, therefore. Whether their presence is a threat to 'our democracy and way of life', as One Nation claims, cannot easily be associated with their concentration in particular areas where such a threat can be stimulated for lack, save in a tiny number of cases, of such contextual stimulation. Commentaries on terrorist outrages in other countries have associated their very high levels of concentration in particular areas – parts of Birmingham, England, being portrayed as 'totally Muslim, where non-Muslims just simply don't go in' and as ghettos that are police 'no-go areas', for example,¹⁵ and the Brussels suburb of Molenbeek as being the breeding ground for 'battle-hardened militants'¹⁶ – with the conditions in which jihadists are radicalised. Indeed, one British report showed that 10 per cent of all UK offenders found guilty of jihadist terrorist offences were from five wards in Birmingham and one-quarter lived in neighbourhoods where Muslims comprised at least 60 per cent of the population.¹⁷

Australian cities contain many more Asians than Muslims, and there are significant territorial concentrations of them, notably in parts of Sydney and Melbourne. Even so, the great majority of Asians there – 75 per cent in Sydney and 88 per cent in Melbourne – live in neighbourhoods where

they form only a minority of the local population. Indeed over one-third of Sydney's Asians live in neighbourhoods where they form less than one-quarter of the population and over eight per cent of them are in neighbourhoods where they form less than one-tenth. Outside Melbourne and Sydney, over 30 per cent of all Asians in those nine urban areas live in neighbourhoods where they form less than 10 per cent of the population and nearly three-quarters of them in neighbourhoods where they form less than 25 per cent. Across urban Australia as a whole – and indeed across much of Melbourne and Sydney – they are scattered rather than segregated.

Areas where Asians dominate – let alone predominate in – neighbourhood populations are not the norm, therefore. There are significant concentrations – mainly of Chinese – in some parts of Melbourne and Sydney but there are few parts of even those places where it can be claimed that Asians have 'swamped' the local population. As has been shown elsewhere, the 'moral panics' that populist-nationalist parties stimulate with regard to minority group residential segregation into claimed 'ghettos' can be over-stated when checked against official data (see, for example, Johnston et al., 2016a).¹⁸ And that is certainly the case in Australia. Most Asians there – even in Sydney and Melbourne where they are concentrated – do not live apart from the general population: they live among them, and Muslims are widely distributed through the country's urban fabric. The size and composition of Australia's ethnic minority populations, and the increasingly multi-cultural society that is emerging, may be a cause for concern with regard to the extent of their social, cultural and civic integration, but associating such concern with the geography of where they live is quite misleading.

Notes

¹ <https://www.socialeurope.eu/2015/12/the-revolt-of-the-anxious-class/>: accessed 7 April 2017.

² See <http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2017/03/kellyanne-conway-trumps-first-lady.html>: accessed 7 April 2017.

³ This is the definition used by the Oxford Dictionaries, which identified 'post-truth' as the Oxford Dictionaries Word of the Year 2016: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/word-of-the-year/word-of-the-year-2016>: accessed 7 April 2017. For a recent example see Oliver (2016).

⁴ W. Davies, 'How statistics lost their power – and why we should fear what comes next'. *The Guardian*, 19 January 2017 - <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/jan/19/crisis-of-statistics-big-data-democracy>: accessed 7 April 2017.

⁵ See <http://www.versobooks.com/blogs/1282-thatcher-the-pm-who-brought-racism-in-from-the-cold>: accessed 7 April 2017.

⁶ <http://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0ahUKEwi33vjYoPbPAhUCOxOKHYHcD58QFggcMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.onenation.com.au%2FLiteratureRetrieve.aspx%3FID%3D155063&usq=AFQjCNFsV1LMDqtaocTWPhWBcgtC1WnWcw&sig2=sAfqq4C59Cd0NSr3E5Vog&bvm=bv.136593572,d.d2s>: accessed 21 October 2016.

⁷ <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-09-20/pauline-hanson- maiden-speech-annotated/7852522> - accessed 27 October 2016.

⁸ <http://www.onenation.com.au/policies/multiculturalism>: accessed 21 October 2016.

⁹ <http://www.onenation.com.au/aims> - accessed 27 October 2016.

¹⁰ <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/federal-election-2016/election-2016-pauline-hanson-warns-of-terror-on-the-streets-and-suburbs-swamped-by-asians-20160704-gpxzpn.html> - accessed 26 October 2016.

¹¹ <http://www.smh.com.au/comment/pauline-hanson-is-wrong-about-hurstville-20160705-gpyxjj.html> - accessed 26 October 2016.

¹² Itaoui (2016) shows that the areas where young Muslims in Sydney identified as characterised by Islamophobia were in general those from which Muslims were absent ('greater Muslim presence in an area is associated with a stronger sense of acceptance across space' – p. 275). This is consistent with findings in Britain that some of the areas with the strongest support for UKIP have few migrants present there. UKIP's only MP represents Clacton constituency where 95 per cent of the population self-classified themselves as White British in 2011.

¹³ The 2011 census allowed respondents to identify with up to two ancestries, and some 30 per cent did so; the multi-response option was used here. Following ABS practice, Asians are defined as people who themselves or their ancestors came from Southern and Central, North East and South East Asia.

¹⁴ <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/life/weekend-australian-magazine/between-two-worlds/story-e6frg8h6-1226617453922> - accessed 26 October 2016.

¹⁵ See <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2015/sep/21/ofcom-criticises-fox-news-for-calling-birmingham-no-go-zone-for-non-muslims>: accessed 7 April 2017.

¹⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/15/molenbeek-the-brussels-borough-in-the-spotlight-after-paris-attacks>: accessed 7 April 2017.

¹⁷ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/terror-map-reveals-danger-of-segregation-k33jddhk0>: accessed 10 April 2017.

¹⁸ For a recent example, see https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/nov/01/call-for-action-to-tackle-growing-ethnic-segregation-across-uk?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other (accessed 2 November 2016) which once again raises the spectre of Britain 'sleepwalking into segregation' when analysis of census data shows greater diversity emerging over the most recent inter-censal decade (Johnston et al., 2015, 2016b)

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Table 1. Asians and Muslims in Australia's eleven largest urban areas, 2011

	Population	% Asian	% Muslim
Sydney	4,028,525	21.2	5.1
Melbourne	3,847,658	16.8	3.7
Brisbane	1,976,529	9.7	1.3
Perth	1,670,952	11.8	2.2
Adelaide	1,198,467	8.7	1.5
Canberra	355,558	12.6	2.1
Newcastle	320,807	3.2	0.6
Wollongong	244,986	4.4	1.4
Hobart	199,620	3.8	0.6
Geelong	173,450	4.2	0.9
Darwin	106,257	13.4	1.2

Table 2. The frequency distributions for the percentage of the local population who are (a) Asian and (b) Muslim across Australia's eleven largest urban areas, at four spatial scales, 2011

	Percentage Asian				Percentage Muslim			
	N	S	D	R	N	S	D	R
Percentile								
Minimum	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
1	1.9	1.6	2.5	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.2
2	3.3	2.3	3.7	4.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.5
<i>1st Quartile</i>	<i>4.1</i>	<i>2.8</i>	<i>4.6</i>	<i>5.1</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>0.2</i>	<i>0.5</i>	<i>0.6</i>
3	4.9	3.4	5.4	6.1	0.0	0.3	0.6	0.7
4	6.9	4.7	7.3	8.4	0.5	0.5	0.8	0.9
<i>Median</i>	<i>9.3</i>	<i>6.7</i>	<i>9.5</i>	<i>10.1</i>	<i>1.1</i>	<i>0.8</i>	<i>1.1</i>	<i>1.2</i>
6	12.4	9.2	12.5	12.8	1.7	1.2	1.6	1.7
7	16.7	12.5	15.7	16.5	2.6	1.8	2.2	2.3
<i>3rd Quartile</i>	<i>19.4</i>	<i>14.5</i>	<i>17.5</i>	<i>18.0</i>	<i>3.2</i>	<i>2.2</i>	<i>2.8</i>	<i>2.9</i>
8	22.8	16.7	20.6	21.2	4.2	2.9	3.4	3.6
9	33.3	25.4	29.0	27.1	7.6	5.0	5.6	5.8
Maximum	92.0	69.8	65.9	44.6	79.7	51.7	48.8	25.3
N =	33,337	2,728	1,166	186	33,337	2,728	1,166	186

N – Neighbourhood; S – Suburb; D – District; R – Region.

Table 3. The number of areas where Asians and Muslims form more than 50 per cent and more than 70 per cent of the population in Australia's eleven largest urban areas, 2011, at four spatial scales

	Asian				Muslim			
	N	S	D	R	N	S	D	R
<i>Areas with more than 50 per cent</i>								
Sydney	738	25	9	0	57	1	0	0
Melbourne	283	4	4	0	25	0	0	0
Brisbane	65	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Perth	16	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Adelaide	7	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Canberra	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newcastle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wollongong	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hobart	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Geelong	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Darwin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Areas with more than 70 per cent</i>								
Sydney	157	0	0	0	4	0	0	0
Melbourne	31	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Brisbane	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
N =	33,337	2,728	1,166	186	33,337	2,728	1,166	186

N – Neighbourhood; S – Suburb; D – District; R – Region.

